

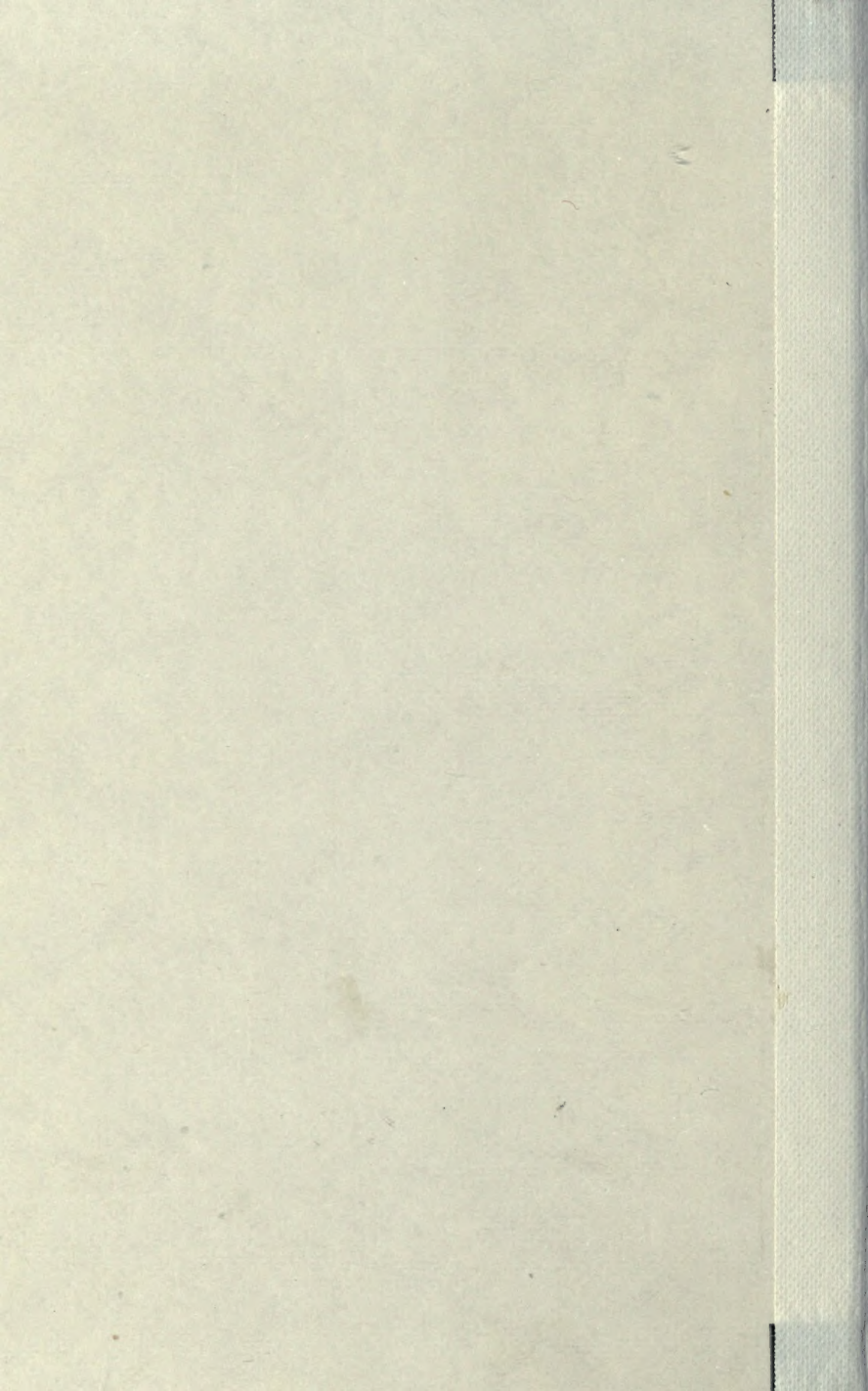
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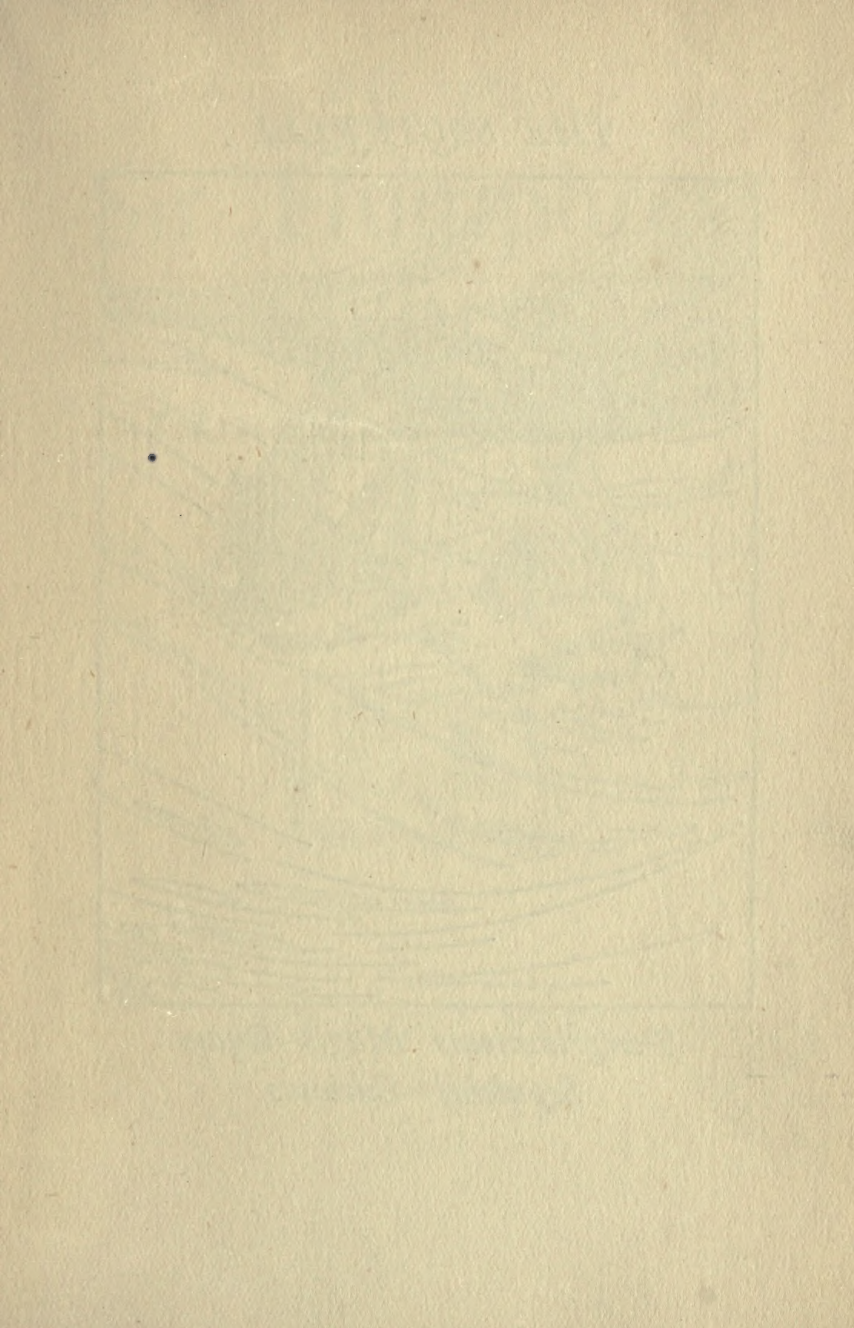




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Sir Humphrey Gilbert

BY THE SAME AUTHOR
THE STORY OF FRANCIS HORATIO
Messrs. J. M. DENT & Sons Ltd.



THE SQUIRRELL



*Peregrinationis Magis Quam
Sepulchri Curiosus*

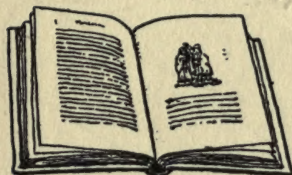
(A.D. 1583)

Sir Humphrey Gilbert

A RECORD & A SURMISE

BY

Hillel Samson



AT
THE FAVIL PRESS
Kensington
1921

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To the memory of an old friend
A. R.

Prologue

THIS short essay, coup de plume, might we call it? — demands perhaps a word of introduction. It is, or purports to be, culled from the transactions of a society of Truth-seekers, the Zetetical Society, to give it the style, selected with much care by a group of students, once upon a time.

Let us leave it at that, in respect of the framework in which the argument is set, since fact or make-believe as to the setting is immaterial, when compared with the subject matter which is presented; that indeed springs from the solid ground of recorded fact, and, when it leaves that ground and in its flight takes the realm of surmise, the drift, the objective of the argument is always the real — let us hope that it finds.

The essay therefore would be regarded and judged, not as a random cast of fancy, but as the serious endeavour of one who would still like to count himself a Truth seeker and once again a member of the Zetetical Society — “Sed revocare gradum”

One word about the frontispiece, it represents the “Squirrell”, the little “Frigat” in which Sir Hum-

phrey Gilbert foundered. Might there be anywhere an authentic representation of this small vessel of ten "tunnes"? In the absence of such the delineator has been obliged to build upon the model of the Elizabethan type of ships, understanding upon good authority that the smaller craft followed in the main the rig of the larger ships.



FROM THE TRANSACTIONS
OF THE TRUTHSEEKERS CLUB



Fifth Session of the Club; *Geoffrey
Trentham* in the Chair.

Contributor:- *Stephen Gray*

SO History is to speak to us to-night" said Travers, "through Stephen Gray, her mouthpiece; of course it will be very historical and I don't quite see where we shall come in, for how can we discuss a bare fact?"

Trentbam. Don't forget that it is an historical fact, Travers, and that such facts are wont to be very much clothed — with men's impressions: that should give scope. But don't worry my dear fellow; it will be strange indeed if this Club cannot find something to say on this as on most subjects.

Morris. I must confess I am all agog with curiosity since I met Gray the other day. He

was quite oblivious of my presence though we almost rubbed shoulders; there was something triumphant in the expression of his face, which somehow suggested to me the discoverer, one who has found something precious and of course quite new. I can fancy that Archimedes may have looked just so, what time he strode the streets of Syracuse shouting Eureka! – or perhaps “Stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes.” You know the title of Gray’s paper, “Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a record and a surmise.” I cannot help thinking that there is a surprise in store for us and that the surmise may hold it. Write it down, my Travers, a surmise, that is where we shall come in; but it is a real pity that we have no other historian in our ranks to surmise otherwise.

Trentham. You forget our paladin, Richard Fortescue; besides, at a pinch Travers would rise to the occasion, so never fear.

The Club had gathered, or was gathering, one by one and two by two. It was an early summer evening, Taurus or Gemini ruling up above; the exact date through some oversight is unrecorded. A fading light lingered in the sky, and in the dusk the faces of the speakers were shadowy and a trifle unsubstantial. Two meditative members, who had been leaning out of the window enjoying the air and the half-

light, and exchanging now and again a casual word, which rose amid their silence much as the rings of smoke from their pipes rose into the air, turned and announced Gray's approach. "Here comes Stephen", said one; let's meet him with a blaze of light — stand by, Zetetikoi."

Stephen Gray's step was heard and the next moment he entered from the darkness of the landing and was greeted with a glare of light and chorus of many voices.

Forthwith the Chairman took the chair and the tumult of a "general post" ensued, each Truthseeker seeming bent upon capturing the most comfortable chair as the first requisite in the search for Truth. Expectation and the Chairman's eye soon calmed the confusion and at command Stephen Gray rose in his place.

Morris' description of him had been really descriptive, for the smile which lighted up his features did suggest a subdued triumph, and in the voice which now spoke there was a note of elation. He said:-

Friends, comrades, searchers after the verities, small or great, if truth has dimensions, lend me your ears and understandings; I bring a problem and a solution for your judgment. I am of the opinion that History — my subject matter is historical — sweeps into her net much that is worthless, then bids us ad-

mere what, in comparison with that which has escaped, is mere dross and refuse. The stage properties are often most carefully preserved, but the spirit, which gave life and dignity and informed the whole, is nowhere really held, if indeed suggested. I think this, disaster shall I call it? may result from the fact that we are apt to neglect trifles, I mean of course things which a superficial glance declares to be trifles, whereas they are the really great things, the things which point at the very heart of the mystery. I suggest that we are too incurious as to "trifles". I hold that in the strait passes of life everything in attendance upon humanity merits the closest inspection, and that a flower worn in the hair or at the breast may tell more of the spirit within than the most accurate delineation of feature; for the face may be a mask, and to capture an expression how difficult! whilst the detail, the flower that is worn for instance, may, nay almost certainly will, have been chosen. Its significance lies here: it will stand for an emotion, a memory, an affinity, something cherished and therefore to be preserved at all costs by us who would read within. Of such flower the beauty of its fashion will lie upon the surface, but beneath there will lie concealed a significance, before whose import

the outward beauty pales: for the flower will be a symbol, a token, which it behoves us to decipher, so we may. Remember once again that it is to the trifle which figures at the crises of life, that I refer; at these supreme moments the soul is wont to rise magnificently to the occasion: nothing then is trifling.

The morning of her execution has dawned for the Lady Jane Grey, and she attires herself for the last time. Picture it — she is about to put off mortality and put on immortality, yet still must wear for a brief space the trappings of Time. She stands, she muses; she makes choice of this, she puts that aside — mere trifles; yet in the choosing and the discarding what a world of meaning, entrusted unto trifles! Ah, she has taken a flower, and she fastens it at the bosom of her dress. What flower? I would have its name, its perfume, its inmost heart: the soul of Lady Jane Grey is there.

Friends, my contribution would have you look upon a trifle, which it seems to me has been passed by. Will you think with me, I wonder?

Gray paused; he seemed still in contemplation of the picture he had conjured up before his hearers. A rustle of papers was heard and again his voice rose, as, bending to his manu-

A.D. 1583

Sir Humphrey Gilbert

A Record and a Surmise

“Munday the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the Frigat was neere cast away, oppressed by waves, yet at that time recovered; and giving forth signes of joy, the Generall, sitting abaft with a booke in his hand creid unto us into the “Hinde” (so oft as we did approach within hearing) ‘We are as neere to heaven by sea as by land.’ Reiterating the same speech, well beseeeming a souldier resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testifie he was.”

Narrative of the last voyage of Sir Humphrey Gilbert told by Edward Haies of Leerepool owner & master of the Golden Hind:

Gosling's Life of Sir H. Gilbert, p. 271.

Time stood at the ninth of September of the year of Grace 1583; it was afternoon. The place was the mid-Atlantic, in the longitude of the Azores and in the latitude of “the height and elevation” of England. Rolling, tossing, straining, in upon this point of time

and space there bore two ships, a smaller and a larger: the weather was very foul, the seas terrific.

Larger and smaller are terms relative, both ships were of insignificant burthen, the larger not exceeding forty "tunnes", the smaller of ten "tunnes" only. Of these two it is the smaller which makes chief claim upon our attention; first, because over much cumbered according to the account given elsewhere, she is evidently distressed; next because of the personality of one on board who stands out by reason of his bearing — he looks like one accustomed to command; lastly because of the attitude and business of this same man:— he is sitting abaft "with a booke in his hand" ! Could anything be more arresting?

Scene: The high seas, a storm raging; enter, a Man and a Book.

Somehow it is borne in upon us that of all present these Two are the *Dramatis Personæ* around which the rest revolve.

Whom have we here? History tells; the larger ship is the "Golden Hind", auspicious name; she is "Vizadmirall" of the fleet, her commander one Edward Haies, from whom we have the story; the smaller ship is the "Squirrell" and he abaft, he of the book, is the "Generall" in command, Sir Humphrey

Gilbert: his bearing has not belied his station and his rank. And the occasion of this Presence? These ships, whence came they, and whither are they bound? The question presses, for this scene is not of the nature of an aside, is no mere by-play, but an integral and not unworthy part of world-issues labouring to find a solution commensurate with their greatness.

It will be worth while considering in brief survey the circumstances of the times and main events which either had been or were upon the threshold, or in the approach. The Great Armada was in the making and, in prospect, the unmaking; for flotsam and jetsam was to be its fate and the Northern seas and the coast lines of England, Scotland and Ireland should witness the undoing, and the wonderment of the long shore folk, as the waves came tumbling the spars and wreckage upon the shores: then should begin the long dream of sunken galleons and their treasures, which the sullen seas withheld. Elizabeth sat on the throne of England intent upon the drama, Catholic versus Protestant, enacting itself upon the European stage; intent chiefly upon the movements of Philip of Spain, at that time outwardly busy upon his mighty monument, the Escorial, the last stone of the

fabric about to be laid; busy inwardly upon what secret design! To the solitude of the Guadarrama Hills alone should it be entrusted, and to the silent chamber, where spider-like the gloomy despot would sit and scheme; whilst along the subtile threads of the web of diplomacy, here centering, came and went the impulses determinant of the destinies of peoples. The retreat was well conceived, and St. Laurence should approve.

Concurrently France was in the throes of Civil War, Henry of Navarre and the League at odds by plot and counter plot, and upon the open field of battle; buried but unlaied, the spectre of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew stalked the land.

In the Low Countries an internecine struggle raged furiously, with varying fortune and splendid heroism on either side. And all the while, within the heart of the German Empire and upon its borders were preparings of strife, presageful happenings and some ominous figures, in being or about to be. Here for instance was Tilly, already attained to full manhood; and here, close at hand, Wallenstein, inscrutable enigma, whose birth should take place in 1584: with him the second of the Trio of protagonists of the Thirty Years War should take shape. Grant another ten

years and the third and greatest of the Three shall have come, Gustavus Adolphus. Then will the stage be well furnished with actors, and great deeds not far to seek.

Of a truth if Heaven, or its antechamber Death, was "neere by sea" it was not far off by land.

Troublous, without question, were those days, the hearts of men strangely moved. Out there where the suns set a New World had arisen; the interminable seas had at length found their bourne, and to and fro, from coast line to coast line, the King's ships ploughed their way, seeking and finding treasure, while the Queen's ships harried and plundered. A New World — how many eyes turned from the Old World westward. But this was not all; that Heaven which seemed so near to some, was it the Old Heaven or was it also New? Or were there two Heavens, Old and New? Some said one thing, some said another, and amid the strife of tongues the sharp edge of the sword smote and smote again, letting loose the importunate souls, setting them free, to find — one Heaven and not two, one Heaven both old and new. Those times were times of quest: Adventure sat in the hearts of men, looked from their eyes, seawards and skywards, and dared greatly.

Curious to relate, the written word played a momentous part in this universal upheaval. The written word, what more peaceful occupation than the tracing of its characters? So it would seem to him who looks upon the surface of things, but to him who looks deeper there shall be disclosed unsuspected forces of incalculable power behind the tracery of black on white. Gradually the MSS stored in the East had been finding their way westwards, then with the fall of Constantinople they had been scattered broadcast, and they had fallen, a fruitful seed, upon the western lands, those time-stained manuscripts, which dusty shelf and secret recess now had given forth. The message borne had come as a revelation; the characters which spoke were old; it was a tongue long disused which now became articulate; but it was so life-giving that mankind felt as if new born, and in thankfulness had named this period of the revival of Learning the period of the new birth, the Renaissance. Here was a fresh Genesis of Humanity, and the beginnings of this Humanism lay in the word. What better instance of its power, what more symbolic of the times than this September afternoon reveals to us in the Mid-Atlantic, in the stern of a wave-tost ship — a man and a book! Terrible men, these scholars.

Such being the times, again the question, Whence these ships and whither bound? and again the question presses, for here are men in great straits, who may not long abide. Know then that these ships are all that remain of the little fleet of five vessels which sailed from Plymouth on the 11th of June, 1583, — Sir Humphrey Gilbert in command. All told there were, first the “Delight”, of 120 tunnes, in which went the “Generall”; next the barke “Raleigh,” of 200 tunnes burthen; then the “Golden Hind”, of 40 tunnes; fourthly the “Swallow”, a practical little craft also 40 tunnes; and lastly the “Squirrell”, commonly called the “Frigat”, of 10 tunnes. The objective of the expedition was the New World, there to explore and if need be take possession; Gilbert was authorized by commission from the Queen to do this thing and he held moreover a colonizing patent, for he was a convinced and convincing Colonist in days when England’s broad acres seemed so broad, considering her then population, that the need for an outlet was not manifest.

According to the plan of campaign it was decided that the first point made should be Cape Race, and that the exploration proceed thence southwards, but only very partially and after many vicissitudes could intention realize

itself. At the very outset the barke "Raleigh" deserted from the expedition, a severe blow; then amid thick and heavy weather the ships parted company, and not till August the 3rd, Cape Race having been made, did all four re-assemble in the harbour of St. John's: on the 5th Gilbert took possession of Newfoundland in the right of the "Crowne of England". This accomplished, he set sail southwards on August 20th with the "Delight", the "Golden Hind", and the "Squirrell"; the "Swallow" was left behind to bring home the sick, this for reasons. Off Sable Island, on August the 29th a dense fog was encountered, and there, "O heavie chance", among the shoals the "Delight" foundered with almost a hundred men, with all her stores, and with the books and records which Gilbert had placed aboard her; this last was his greatest grief. Greatly discomfited, pursued by thick fogs and blustering weather, and meeting with much increase of the cold, the crews lost heart, particularly the crew of the little "Frigat", and in the end after counsel taken and due deliberation it was decided to abandon further exploration and return home. Accordingly on August the 31st the course was altered and the ships stood for England.

Some explanation seems to be required, other

than stress of weather and disasters sustained, to account for this abandonment of a plan already fixed upon by one so experienced and so proved as Sir Humphrey Gilbert. This explanation, if we are to believe Haies, lay in the persuasion, very fixed, of the General, that in taking possession of Newfoundland he had secured a country of great natural wealth, in particular very rich in silver ore, and such indeed had been the report of Daniel, the Saxon refiner, upon certain ores obtained: Daniel unfortunately had gone down in the "Delight". Holding this belief Gilbert would naturally be of the opinion that as a preliminary enough had been achieved, and instead of pursuing a doubtful fortune by further exploration he would be anxious rather to get home as quickly as possible and return the following year with a more adequate expedition: such in fact was his declared intention. This brings us to the opening scene on the momentous ninth of September and shews us again the two ships labouring amid the waves.

Regarding the scene anew it must occasion surprise that the General, the master spirit, should be aboard the smaller vessel, one moreover "overcharged upon her decks, with fights, nettings and small artillerie, too cumbersome for so small a boate, that was to pass through

the ocean sea at this season of the yere." Why was this? Because he had deliberately chosen the post of danger: they had besought him to make the rest of the journey on the "Hind", but his answer had been, "I will not forsake my little company going homeward, with whom I have passed so many stormes and perils."

Thus it comes that at this moment of stress, greater than any which has hitherto befallen upon the homeward journey, we see him confronting the wild commotion with a book in his hand. A master spirit this, one framed to inspire, a leader indeed for a desperate cause. But is it assumed, this calm self possession? Is it a dramatic pose to instil confidence? Then, even so, almost divine the art, we must confess it; worth more than salvos of artillery, better than the blare of challenging trumpets, this magnificent semblance of composure: "We shall weather the storm yet, yes surely we shall ride it out, for look, the General, he is reading, see how quietly he turns the pages"—in the mazed hearts of his little company this thought must have been, if not upon their lips.

But was it a pose, was it art? No, for hark, he has a cry in his mouth, "We are as neere to heaven by sea as by land"; and it comes from the heart, rings true, this cry outcries the

boisterous winds and waves. No, this masterful spirit is sublimely indifferent to aught save the truth of his message.

Not thus will have been his mind as he gave the order to put over the helm and stand for England; not thus as in the ensuing days and nights his ships, laggard to his impatience, toiled over the endless watery plain; for this man was ambitious, first and foremost of fame, then of power, then of wealth as power bestowing. Without stretch of imagination we can picture him pacing the deck of the "Squirrel", his gaze set to the compass — eastward ho! and we can know the thoughts which will have been working beneath the calm exterior. The sun would rise to greet his eyes and make its majestic ascent, casting a swaying shadow upon the balancing deck, as now and again the clouds uncovered; then slowly declining it would set in flame in the vessel's wake. The moon from cloud rents would look upon the same sight, a man gazing eastwards. And the stars, the hurrying stars, from drifts in the driven heavens would catch the same vision, whilst always, by day, by night, to the horizon's edge, the live leaping waters encompassing on all sides — green blue by day, flecked with yeasty spume; by night, darkly heaving, with faint, luminous crestings.

Of what should this man be thinking? Of a land astern, which the folds of a flag possessed, a flag which he had planted; a land of untold riches; a royal gift, and he brings it to lay it at the feet of a Queen, who sits upon a throne, in a green island - out there. Ah, when would the cliffs of that dear land lift their unshaken strength above the seas' inconstancies! Then what joy; then Plymouth would loom ahead, and the Hoe be alive with folk, Devon folk, to greet a Devon man; what rejoicings, what hand shakings! Then should come the summons to Court, and from villages and towns the flocking of the people to view the gay procession and speed England's "first Empire Builder" and his company upon their way. He feels it all, the joy, the pride; and then the sights of London Town, its thronged streets, its Court, the feastings and banquetings, the pomp and pageantry and the bravery of it all. The ocean's emptiness had given place to a populous city and through its joyous clamorous midst, the centre of all things, rides Sir Humphrey Gilbert bearing the tidings of his El Dorado.

Dreams! With the dawning of September the ninth, the threat of the labouring winds and the seas had become so ominous that Gilbert has begun to doubt: the land astern lies

less substantial, the land ahead is deeper below the horizon, and now in the afternoon, as the serried ranks of the waves oppose their countless ramparts to the breasting ships, he can see no further than each surging crest. Perhaps after all it will not be Plymouth Harbour that he will make?

The shock of an overwhelming sea breaks over the bulwarks enveloping the "Squirrel" in a deluge of water and sheets of bursting spray. "She is lost, she cannot live" breaks from them of the "Hind", but no, she emerges, gallant little craft that she is; shaking from the watery toils she rises triumphant and rides the waves: the heroic soul has bestowed unimagined buoyancies. But Gilbert is under no illusions, though he will fight to the end; as that great surge came rushing aft it swept away utterly his El Dorado astern, Plymouth Port ahead and all its visions – gone, effaced; but, entrancing sight, there opened out before his inner vision, tranquil, fair, the Port of Heaven. Then came that cry "We are as neere to heaven by sea as by land": the winds were large for that Port.

.....

The stormy day drew to its close; darkness set in; the tempest still raged.

"The same Munday night about twelve of

the clock, or not long after, the Frigat being ahead of us in the Golden Hinde, suddenly her lights were out, whereof as it were in a moment we lost the sight, and withall our watch cried, the Generall was cast away, which was too true. For in that moment the Frigat was devoured and swallowed up of the Sea. Yet still we looked out all that night, and ever after until we arrived upon the coast of England."

That Monday night the "Squirrell", made the Port of Heaven; and whilst aboard the "Hind" and ever after, through the long nights and the days which followed, whilst still they looked, the little Frigat rode quietly at anchor in its smooth waters.

Thus far the record and now the surmise: what might that book be which Sir Humphrey Gilbert held in his hand? does any tradition concerning it linger in the Family? Is there any hint, even remote? No idle curiosity prompts the inquiry, for a book which could fittingly companion a man at so supreme a moment should be worth knowing and possessing, if need be at a great price; nevertheless the question does not seem to have arisen, and in Gosling's life the incident of the book passes without comment. There

are however circumstances which point so strongly in the direction of one book that the evidence must be allowed to reach a high degree of probability.

The first most natural supposition to present itself is that it was the Bible. Surely no more likely companionship, none more becoming the wayfarer as the confines of life draw near; no better manual of navigation for the seafarer who would make the Port of ports, for which finally we all are bound. Proved moreover, times innumerable, the acceptable fellowship of this Book of books, when the narrows of life have become too strait, when the sharpness of death is at hand. Then, say, was it not the Bible? It must have been.

Well might it have been, but there are reasons for thinking it was another book; and that book – Sir Thomas More's "Utopia". Can this be proved? Proved it cannot be, but if we may accept the geometers' axiom, that parallelism is the equivalent of an infinitely postponed approach, then borrowing of him we may assert that proof, *i.e.* certitude, is the equivalent of probability multiplied infinitely, in other words the more we multiply probability the nearer we approximate to certitude. Now probability may rest upon grounds which

are general and grounds which are special, and when these two concur they multiply into each other and may, to the satisfaction of most, bring proof within sight: it all depends upon their values. Let us approach this question from these two points of view, the general and the special, in this order. What are the circumstances of the case? Here is Humphrey Gilbert upon a great adventure, he has just explored a new world, and he has it in mind to plant this new world with human seed taken from the Old world — he would colonize. But human beings may not be scattered at random upon the soil; to thrive they must be organised, more or less, into communities, bound by customs, sanctioned and upheld by laws, the whole adapted to the new conditions surrounding the infant state. The chance of a noble experiment is here, but success or failure must lie upon the wisdom which shall plant the foundations. Who may here give counsel? can any book guide? Why here it is as if made for the purpose, here is More's book, and just such a guide, for it deals with the identical problems under consideration, the framing of a new society, the construction of a model state; and though it may be questioned in how far the author of *Utopia* believed in the practicability of all the details set down in his treatise,

it is clear that his book embodies very much that he thought not only desirable but attainable. This book moreover had a European reputation and it is quite impossible that one such as Gilbert, highly connected, half-brother to Raleigh, acquainted with the great world himself, a man of culture, an Elizabethan, who moreover had studied both at Eton and at Oxford, in days when learning was a passion; impossible that he should not have known of this book; nay it is more than probable that it had been his companion for years, perhaps ever since the days when the idea of colonization first took concrete shape within his active brain. Without labouring this point further it must be admitted that considering the purpose of this book, quite apart from its literary attractions, the likelihood is great that it will have been included among the books which he took with him on his voyage.

But when the "Delight" foundered Gilbert's store of books went down, with his notes. Yes, but not all, not all, for on the ninth of September, we *know*, he had a book in his hand. That must have been a very precious book, singled out from the rest for close companionship; but, it will be objected, what should colonization schemes for this world signify to a man whose immediate concern in such hour

of peril must have been his own fitness as a citizen of the next? Why this book at that moment? This brings us to the next evidence available, the cogency of which rests upon the possibility of linking the *fact* of the book with the *theory* that it was the *Utopia*. A remarkable coincidence comes in here: it has reference to the cry to which Gilbert gives utterance just as the "Squirrell" had barely escaped being swamped by the heavy seas, "We are as neere to heaven by sea as by land."

Now this very sentence occurs in the *Utopia* towards the end of the Prologue (as it is entitled in the English Translation) in a passage descriptive of Raphael Hythloday. The actual words in the first English Edition of 1551 are:- "The way to heaven, out of all places, is of like length and distance." The coincidence is very striking, the sentiment identical, and though the words deviate, they may still stand as a quotation, Gilbert's version more brief and simple, better adapted to wind and waves and as an exhortation from a sailor to sailors. But even this verbal deviation fails as an objection to the passage as a quotation, for it seems likely that Gilbert held in his hand the original Latin Text; likely because he was a cultured man, of whom Gosling says: "Such of his writings as are left to us are lucid and

masterly, and abound in lofty sentiments expressed with poetic imagery. They display an intimate acquaintance with both Greek and Latin philosophers and poets, and Latin quotations are frequently used." p.18. On this view the quotation would be Gilbert's own direct rendering of the Latin.

There remains the doubt whether More himself was quoting from other sources when expressing the above sentiment, but of this there is no evidence either in the original Latin or in the English Translation, and in the absence of such evidence it must be assumed that the words and the sentiment were More's own: Gilbert therefore would be drinking at the fountain head. To make sure of this the British Museum *Editio Princeps* of 1516, printed in Louvain, has been consulted, where the sentence stands:- *Undique ad superos tantundem esse viæ.*

Accordingly it would seem as if on that memorable day in the stern of the "Squirrell" there sat not one man but two in deep discourse, Humphrey Gilbert and Blessed Thomas More. And first More spoke, and as the menace of the waves grew more fierce he said: "*Cælo tegitur qui non habet urnam*"; He that hath no grave-stone the sky shall cover him.

Gilbert looked upwards and with the eye of

the soul saw right through the stooping wrathful skies unto the blue o'er-arching vault of heaven, his canopy to be: assenting he bowed his head upon the page.

In upon the twain now rushed the green seething waters; then as the "Squirrell" rose from out the torment More spoke again: "*Undique ad superos tantundem esse viæ.*" The words leapt to the heart of Gilbert and unable to contain himself for joy he cried, he shouted, to them aboard the "Hinde", "We are as near to heaven by sea as by land." Not once only did this cry escape his lips, it was repeated "so oft as we did approach within hearing;" above the roar of wind and waves it rose exultant, comfort bearing, and reached them in the "Hinde".

As the morning of the 10th broke upon the scene, it discovered a wide emptiness; the "Hinde" had struggled through and was beating its way somewhere beyond the horizon line. But what was that which tossed upon the ocean's surface and around which the circling gulls wheeled, dipping and striking? It was an open book; it was More's *Utopia*; let the wind and the waves and the gulls torment it at pleasure, it had delivered its message — the Past had spoken.

.....

The Club had its garrulous and its silent nights; silence claimed this one. The greatness of Truth was proclaimed from the Chair and its dominance affirmed by Gray according to the usual formulary. Then again came silence broken by disjointed exclamations.

"How dramatic!" said Travers.

"How true," said Blake, "it must have been the *Utopia*."

"What a glorious failure! What a victory!" The speakers' names are unrecorded.

Richard Fortescue (abstractedly). How run the lines? They have been constantly with me during my history studies. Ah, here they come, or my attempted version, for the original is in the German, though I forget the author's name:—*

Sits the child of Man, the pygmy,
By the ocean-marge of Time;
Scoops, in hollowed hand and puny,
Drops from out its boundless tide.

Sits the child of Man, the pygmy;
Hearkens Rumour's random whisper,
Hearkening writes: O record petty,
What thy title? — "the World's History"!

* *Sitzt das kleine Menschenkind an dem Ozean der Zeit,
Schöpft mit seiner kleinen Hand Tropfen aus der Ewigkeit.
Sitzt das kleine Menschenkind; sammelt flüsternde Gerüchte;
Schreibt sie in ein kleines Buch, und darüber — Weltgeschichte!*

The lines have often depressed me when I have thought on their truth and how little of Time's wreckage comes floating down to us, and that little not always of the worthiest. But Gray's contribution comforts me and I do not propose to surmise otherwise, but rather to accept and applaud this piece of flotsam as of the best that Time could have given us: henceforth I propose to consider the *trifle* very narrowly before I pass on. Then long live History and the miracle of its charactered scroll — *maneant litera scripta*.

A longer pause followed: the Chairman looked round enquiringly — silence alone was eloquent. Then to the surprise of all Gray rose in his place and spoke as follows:-

Gentlemen, according to custom you have proclaimed the greatness of Truth and its dominance; this Truth constrains me now; and Fortescue's and your approving words, and silence, these all enforce the constraint. I have a confession to make: since this paper was written it has come to my knowledge through the kindness of a friend, who speaks with the authority of an acknowledged scholar, that those utterances of More, which I have concluded to be his own, are after all ancient words repeated almost verbatim. My friend referred me to Professor Churton Collins' edition of the

Utopia, 1904, p. 150, where among the notes we find that the words "He that hath no grave" is to be found in Lucan's *Pharsalia* vii, 819; and that the second utterance is an adaptation of the words of Anaxagoras, as preserved by Cicero *Tusc.* i § 104. It seems that when Anaxagoras was dying at Lampsacus, he was asked by his friends whether, in the event of his death, he would wish to be carried to his country Clazomenæ and replied: "There is no necessity, for on all sides the way to the shades is equally long (*Nihil necesse est, inquit, undique enim ad inferos tantundem viæ est*). These references I have looked up and confirmed, with a qualification, and yet have not modified my paper, you will say. My apologia, Gentlemen, is this — in the first place that in essence my conclusion (as a surmise) stands unaltered despite the new knowledge; and in the second place that I knew I should have the opportunity of putting before you the whole case: let me state it forthwith.

The problem before me was to show that the occurrence of those two sayings in More's *Utopia* points to More as the author of the book which Humphrey Gilbert held in his hand on that memorable 9th of September. We know^{now} that More had gleaned these sayings from ancient sources, did not himself invent

them, and therefore that Gilbert also might have come across them at the fountain head but it would be strange indeed if another and elder book of which More had no cognisance should be found to contain those selfsame passages collated and so juxtaposed as we find them in the *Utopia*. Placed here as they are they form together an *argumentum ad consolationem* of such comfort that it accounts amply for the "signes of joy" which Gilbert gave forth as he shouted across the waves to them in the Hind. The argument runs thus:- care not for the body, you that adventure your lives by sea and land, for wherever it may come to lie it shall be nobly housed, domed by the vault of heaven; neither care for the soul, where it may part company with the body, for everywhere it shall be as near to heaven — therefore be ye comforted. Gilbert *was* comforted and that he wished to share his comfort with his comrades is attested by his shout. But, it will be said, he gives but one sentence — yes, but wind and water forbade a sermon, even a syllogism; nay there was scarce room for more than an ejaculation, and so he chooses the major premise, in the sense that the soul counts for more than the body. Granting this presentation of things then may it not be claimed that if More did not create the in-

dividual sentences he put them together and and framed the argument.

Passing now to the individual sentences, examination of these, as they are found in the *Utopia*, and comparison with their prototypes, as they stand in Lucan and in Cicero's version of Anaxagoras, brings more convincing evidence of the personality of More in the Utopian version, for there are differences.

Thus on looking up the context of the passage from Lucan it was clear that the argument is frankly materialistic: "*capit omnia tellus quæ genuit-*," the earth takes possession of all things that she generates, and the "*qui non habet*" is the equivalent of "*quod non habet*," - a reading which I actually found in one version. But the '*qui*' of Lucan's clay would make no appeal to Gilbert, who had done with earth and was looking heavenwards; it would bring no consolation. On the other hand the '*qui*' of More's soul would speak quite another message, whilst, at the same time, to the tender regard for the fitting sepulture of the mansion, in which it had dwelt in amity and wonderment, this promise would give true solace; and we know that Gilbert was almost beside himself for joy.

Again when we come to the saying of Anaxagoras we find that More has replaced *ad inferos* by *ad superos*, transporting the soul therewith to heaven instead of to the shades.

"To the Shades", it is at best a gloomy place, can it signify much whether the journey be short or long? perhaps the longer the better? But "to Heaven" and for one who is a "souldier resolute in Jesus Christ" — what beatitudes invite! To such an one it will be matter of supreme moment that this port should be made without delay. Now to which of these two versions does Gilbert lend his voice in his hour of need — he cries: "We are as neere to heaven by sea as by land," quoting unmistakably More's variant. Be it noted in passing that this English rendering differs from the rendering of the first English translation of the *Utopia* of 1551, which has — "the way to Heaven out of all places is of like length and distance" and is the more literal version. This suggests that Gilbert was his own translator and that the book in his hand was a Latin edition. His rendering of *undique* — "by sea as by land" rises more nobly to the occasion; but the point before all else is that he clings to More's *ad superos* and echoes his "to Heaven". Gentlemen, am I absolved and is my surmise justified?.....

"Blessed Thomas More, I would burn a candle at thy shrine for that thou did'st comfort Humphrey Gilbert in his hour of need." — 'twas Paul Vincent who spoke.

"Amen," said Austin Sherwood.



Epilogue



It is strange to note, if the force of the foregoing argument be allowed, how applicable to Sir Humphrey Gilbert are the words which More puts into the mouth of Peter Giles, when describing the man, Raphael Hythloday, the discoverer and chronicler of Utopia. We find the description in the Prologue, where Giles, relating how Hythloday at his own entreaty was left behind along with twenty three others, by Amerigo Vespucci on the last of his four voyages, goes on to say: "He was therefore left bebynde, for hys mindes sake, as one that toke more thoughte and care for tradaylyng than dyinge; havynge customablye in hys mouthe theis sayinges: He that hathe no grave ys covered wyth the skye; and, The way to heaven owte of all places is of like length and distance"..... The English here is that of Ralph Robynson, the first translator of the Utopia; in the Latin of the Editio Princeps, circa 1516, the passage reads as follows: "Itaque relictus est uti

obtemperaret animo ejus, peregrinationis magis quam sepulchri curioso, quippe cui hæc assidue sunt in ore: cælo tegitur qui non habet urnam, et undique ad superos tantundem esse viæ." *Robynson's rendering is of course a faithful version, yet if one dare criticise his "racy and picturesque English" as Churton Collins describes it, t'would be to wish that he had given us the more literal equivalents of 'curioso' and 'sepulchri'. If this be done the part of the passage would read, "as one more curious of travel than of sepulture," which variant would have the advantage of retaining the terseness of the Latin with greater textual closeness, and at the same time we should keep the primary significance of the word 'curious' in its present day use, namely, 'eager to learn', a meaning not lightly to be forgone in favour of its decadent alternative 'inquisitive'. Then again 'sepulture', burial, is not the exact equivalent of death. Of death it does not become us to be incurious, seeing that it is the essential clause in our tenure of life, with ever present threat of foreclosure; but as to where we may die and where we may lie, of that it is permitted to be less heedful — holding with George Herbert —*

*The world's Thy box;
How then there tost,
Can I be lost?*

"More intent on travel than concerned as to burial", or transposed "More incurious of sepul-

ture than curious of travel. What a magnificent motto for the world's explorers! among whom Humphrey Gilbert would have held high rank. How it would have befitted a longer tenure of life and how it did become his death —

PEREGRINATIONIS MAGIS
QUAM SEPULCHRI
CURIOSUS.



For the foregoing record the reader is referred to the "Life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, England's first Empire Builder," by William Gilbert Gosling Messrs. Constable & Company, London, 1911.



DEATH & THE BOOK

A DIALOGUE

DEATH (*log.*) I have the mastery.

THE BOOK (*resp.*) Nay, nay – thou art empty,
 whereas I am full of life.

DEATH I have the mastery and I
 abide.

THE BOOK In vain thou boastest; if life
 were not thou hadst not been.
 Thou art a flying shadow,
 the overcasting of a change,
 naught else.

 'Tis I who stand; the Written
 Word endures.

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